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ABSTRACT

An anonymous questionnaire was administered to a representative sample of incoming freshmen at the University of Maryland, College Park (N=491; 53 percent male, 47 percent female). Data were compared with previous surveys at Maryland (Horowitz and Sedlacek, 1973; Fago and Sedlacek, 1974 a,b) and analyzed by percentages, chi-square, F and Friedman 2-way analysis of variance. Results indicate that more freshmen have tried marijuana than in previous years, but there are fewer regular users. In the most recent year studied, males have a higher incidence of use of marijuana, cocaine, and beer than females, while females report a higher incidence of speed use. City residents reported a higher incidence of drug use, followed by suburban and rural freshmen. Students tended to use drugs to "get high, feel good," and tended not to use drugs because of "no desire to experience its effects." Reasons for use and nonuse were not significantly different across years. Students in the latter two years studied were more apt to feel that marijuana should be legalized and to come to the counseling center for help, but they were less likely to attend a drug education program. (Author)

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TRENDS IN FRESHMAN ATTITUDES AND USE OF DRUGS

Beverley R. Howard and William E. Sedlacek

Research Report # 4-74

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According to Jerome H. Jaffe, President Nixon's former drug chief, the drug epidemic which swept the country is pretty much over now. Although the public still has some legitimate reasons for concern, there is no longer cause for panic, says Jaffe. Fewer people are dying from narcotic overdoses; programs have been successfully initiated to handle the Vietnam epidemic along with assisting the Vietnam veterans when they return home; and steps have been taken to collect and disperse information revealing national and local trends in drug use. Therefore, as Jaffe sees it, the present day need for concern does not center so much around the use of heroin or other narcotic drugs (*Psychology Today*, August, 1972). In fact, there may be some comfort in knowing that the peak of narcotic addiction in the United States occurred not during the early 1970's as is believed, but during the first two decades of this century (Terry and Pellens, 1928). Around the turn of the century the presence of approximately one million narcotic addicts in this country resulted from the use of many patent medicines which were sold without a prescription and which contained narcotics, as well as from the failure then to realize that all derivatives of opium are addictive. During that time heroin was viewed as a non-addicting pain killer which could be used to help treat morphine addiction.

Instead of focusing so much attention on heroin and other narcotic drugs, Jaffe feels concern should be turned toward the recent trend in heavy marijuana smoking by a large segment of the population. While at present there is still some uncertainty whether or not long-term marijuana use causes any psychological damages, the social damage brought about by substantial numbers of the population "dropping out" can be real and costly (*Psychology Today*, August, 1973).

The once projected stereotype of the drug addict, drug user, dope addict, from a broken home, with a seventh grade education, a prison record or delinquent past, a seductive, but overbearing mother, and a passive-agressive personality (Alksne, 1959) is no longer applicable. More recently, with the emergence of middleclass and college student use, the addict stereotype has undergone substantial changes. This is true for hard drug as well as marijuana users. In fact, from a survey of 5,600 students at various campuses of the City University of New York, a profile of the average marijuana user was constructed. According to this study, the average student user is a male, 19 to 20 years old, a social science major with a grade point average of about 2.5. He spends approximately 10 hours a week in paid or volunteer work and is not romantically attached to one particular girl. He comes from a family where both parents were in the home and where the family income is $10,000 to $15,000 annually. He feels no need for professional psychological or psychiatric help (Semas, 1971).

But even so, to expect to understand and perhaps to explain the present day use or misuse of drugs by focusing primarily on either the street addict or the middle class college drop out from society is totally unrealistic, confusing and naive. By focusing on outdated or unsubstantiated sterotypes, we tend to legitimatize the notions that drug use is a sub-cultural event and that only "they" use drugs. Instead, information is needed on how and why large numbers of people are using and misusing a great variety of substances. Surveys indicate that different groups of people use different drugs, and for

various reasons. This distinction must be made before much headway in the area of drug research can be expected. In this respect, with the recent interest in marijuana, more information has been gained as to why this particular drug is used by such large numbers of people. A two-year study of marijuana use and personality factors of student users at a New England college revealed that 50% of the total student body used marijuana. The findings suggest that enthusiasm for marijuana use is not limited to a particular intellectual or social group and that the "dominant reported appeal is marijuana's euphoria and relaxation..." (Bonier, 1972). A 1969 study noted that college drug users are usually intelligent and experiment with drugs for experience, in search of relevance, or for inner exploration. This study also found that colleges where drug use is exceptionally high are usually high pressure schools academically (Keninston, 1969). But Hochmon and Brill, looking at chronic marijuana users in a college setting, found no indication of diminished scholastic performance, ambition or motivation in these regular users (Grossman, 1972). Other marijuana research tends to indicate that the student users do not escalate to hard drugs and in fact, evidence very little multiple drug use. But at the least one third of those who use marijuana started before entering college (Semas, 1971).

Turning the focus now to drug users in general (not specifically marijuana users) more and different kinds of information have been obtained. For example, drug users as opposed to non-users in New York City, were found to be less involved in family, school and religion, but more involved in peer-related cultural activities and especially active in politics. Similar findings were obtained in Michigan high schools, a west coast university, and the city of Berkeley, indicating that this is not merely a regional distinction (Brotman, Silverman and Suffet , 1970).

Another interesting finding was that not everyone who tries drugs continues to use them. Of Semas' 5,600 subjects, 33% of those who used marijuana had stopped, and 60% of LSD users, 67% of heroin, opium or cocaine users also had ceased using the drugs. Drug use of any kind was noted as not significantly changing a student's academic performance. The users got the same grades as the entire student body, and the same numbers as non-users planned to go to graduate school (Semas, 1971).

In settings other than the college environment, similar studies have also been conducted. The patients and employees of a larger metropolitan Veterans Administration neuropsychiatric hospital were surveyed to investigate the extent of illegal drug use, attitudes toward use of illegal drugs, and "street" knowledge of the drug subculture. Of the 211 patients and 460 employees surveyed, 23% of the former and 30% of the latter reported illegal drug use. The majority of the staff drug users were solely marijuana users, while the majority of the patients, in addition to marijuana, had been involved with heavier drugs including amphetamines, barbiturates, speed, LSD and other hallucinogens, heroin, and cocaine. The patients also reported a good deal of multiple drug use. All in all, there was a strong negative correlation between age and drug use for both the staff and the patients in that over half of the drug users were under 29 years of age (Mutalipassi et al., 1972). This last finding seems to once again point to the young adult or college population

as the principal drug users in the country.

Over the past three years the University of Maryland has been surveying undergraduate students with respect to their use or non-use of drugs. This research tends to indicate that at the University of Maryland the incidence of drug use is less than that at the national level, that typically men use drugs more so than women, and upperclassmen more so than freshmen. It also indicates that marijuana and hashish are used more frequently than any other drugs (Horowitz and Sedlacek, 1973, Fago and Sedlacek, 1974 a,b).

The purpose of this study was basically twofold: to investigate the reported behavior and attitudes of University of Maryland freshmen toward 13 listed drugs; and to make comparisons, discover trends, and note changes, if any, in the students' drug behavior and attitudes over the past three years. The drugs investigated in this study ranged from heroin to marijuana to the legal drugs, i.e., hard liquor, beer, wine and cigarettes. A description of the evidence, frequency, and attitudes by sex of respondent is given, but in addition, relationships between attitudes and behaviors, trends, and comparisons are also presented.

Method

An anonymous questionnaire was administered to a representative group of incoming freshmen at the University of Maryland, College Park, (N=491; 53% male, 47% female) who attended a summer orientation program. Data were analyzed by frequency and percent responses by the total group and then according to sex of subject, place of residence and type of high school attended. Comparisons with previous years and of users and non users were done, using χ^2, F and Friedman 2-way analysis of variance.

Results

The legal drugs, wine, beer and cigarettes were reported used more regularly (at least once a week) than almost all of the illegal drugs (26% reported regular use of wine, 41% beer, and 25% cigarettes)in 1973-74. Marijuana was reported used at least once by 52% of the 1973-74 sample, but regularly used by only 26%. This represented a slight decline in the frequency of marijuana use over the 1972-73 study (29%) and a much greater and significant (χ^2, .05) decline over the 1971-72 population sampled (39%). Thus more freshmen have used marijuana, but those who did use it are less apt to be regular users.

Table 1 presents the incidence of use of the 13 drugs for three years. Incidence is defined as having ever used a drug. There were significant differences among the three years (χ^2, .05) in incidence of use. The major differences seem to be increases in the use of marijuana, hashish and cocaine.

When the results are examined by sex (Table 2), differences between males and females appeared smaller in 1973-74 than in past years (χ^2, .05). Males appeared to have a higher incidence of use of marijuana, cocaine and beer than females, while females reported a higher incidence of speed use. In 1971-72 and 1972-73 males were generally higher in incidence on all drugs except mescaline in 1971-72 and cigarettes in 1972-73.

In an analysis of the 1973-74 data alone, a clear pattern of incidence of use by place of residence emerged. Residents of a city of any size reported the greatest incidence of use of all drugs, followed by suburban freshmen and then rural freshmen (χ^2,.05). For instance, city residents reported a greater incidence of use of marijuana (60% vs. 30%), heroin (6% vs. 0%), and wine (90% vs. 74%) among others, when compared to rural residents.

Type of school attended was also significantly related to incidence of use of all drugs (χ^2,.05). Students in private (non-parochial) schools tended to use all drugs more than those from public or parochial schools. For instance, those from private schools reported a greater incidence of use of marijuana (68%, vs. 50% parochial and 45% public), speed (24%, vs. 6% parochial and 10% public), cocaine (16% vs. <1% parochial and 3% public), heroin (4% vs. <1% parochial and 1% public), cigarettes (56% vs. 37% parochial and 42% public) among others.

While the analyses reported thus far have been on incidence of drug use, the data on frequency of use show very similar patterns across the years and groups discussed here.

Tables 3 and 4 show reported reasons for the use and non-use of drugs for the three years of the survey. The rationale given most often for using drugs was to "get high or feel good," Other prevalent reasons for using drugs included "making a good mood last longer or fine feeling better," and being more friendly, sociable and/or more loving." Those polled who had not used drugs or did not intend to use them again reported "no desire to experience its effects" as the major deterring reason. "Observations of effects on others" and "reports or experiences of harmful psychological effects" were also frequently given as motivating factors for non-use of drugs. There were no significant difference by sex or across years for reasons for use or non-use ($\chi^2$and Friedman 2-way ANOVA at .05).

Table 5 shows means and standard deviations of responses toward attitude items across the three years of the survey. Results of analyses of variance and Duncan post hoc tests (.05) indicate that the 1972-73 and 1973-74 data were not significantly different, but both years were significantly different from 1971-72. Students in the latter two years were more apt to feel that marijuana should be legalized and to come to the Counseling Center for help with a drug problem. However, students in 1972-73 and 1973-74 were less apt to attend a drug education program on campus than were 1971-72 students.

Within the 1973-74 data women were significantly more likely (F,.05) to feel that: marijuana should <u>not</u> be legalized, a drug counseling service should be provided and funded by student government, they were <u>not</u> sorry for people on drugs, and that the same laws that apply to alcohol and tobacco should <u>not</u> apply to marijuana. The same trends appeared in 1971-72 and 1972-73 except that women were relatively more in favor or counseling in 1973-74.

Some differences also appear when the samples are divided into drug users and non-users (F,.05). Drug users are more strongly in favor of legalization of marijuana, but they share the same negative feelings as non-users regarding

the legalization of all drugs. They are much less likely to report marijuana and other drug users or sellers to the proper authorities, and strongly agree with non-users that a drug counseling service should be provided for the students. Finally, the drug users, much more strongly than the non-users, feel the University should not turn in drug users or sellers of which they have knowledge. These same trends were evidenced in both the 1972 and 1973 samples.

Discussion

Between 1969 and 1972, national concern over the drug issue reached monumental proportions, but more recently, apparently in the face of a decrease in the incidence of drug use, fewer reported deaths resulting from drug abuse, or attention diverted to other pertinent social issues, this attention and concern has been diminishing. National surveys do, in fact, indicate a steady decrease in drug use, especially addicting opiates and other "hard drugs." At the same time, there appears to be a steady increase in the use of marijuana and popular sentiment toward its legalization. The initial widespread fear perpetuated by possible but unknown psychological and physiological dangers including addiction has been mostly dissipated with the failure of researchers to find actual grounds for these fears.

These national trends are very much reflected in the University of Maryland polls which have been conducted annually since 1971. However, based on the data presented in this study, anything more than tentative conclusions would have to be discouraged due to the limitations of such data. As noted by Goode (1970) and Horowitz and Sedlacek (1973) in this type of poll, although it is completely anonymous, the respondent is being asked to admit to committing a crime, i.e., illegal use of drugs. Therefore, it might be reasonable to hypothesize that more individuals are actually using drugs than are reporting use on the poll. On the other hand, social pressures from peers may be acting to influence individuals to use drugs who would not have done so or have little desire to do so on their own. Ideally, these two variables would cancel each other out, but this assumption cannot be made based on the data available.

The sample consisted only of incoming freshmen at the University of Maryland and may not be representative of the entire student body including upperclassmen and graduate students. Therefore, the reader is cautioned against generalizing the results beyond the incoming freshmen class. Previous studies on drug use of upperclassmen at the University of Maryland estimate that incidence of marijuana use was 15% in 1967, 24% in 1968, 36% in 1969, and 55% in 1971 (McKenzie, 1970, Horowitz and Sedlacek, 1973). In light of these data and those of the current study, incidence of marijuana use among upperclassman should be considerably higher than 55%.

Data on incidence of drug use reported in terms of place or residence and type of school should be interpreted carefully because of the disproportionate number of students within certain classes as compared to others. For example, although there were 138 students from large suburban areas of 500,000 population or more, there were only 12 students from cities of

50,000 to 100,000 population. Similarly, there were 405 students sampled from public high schools and only 25 from private and 46 from parochial or church related schools.

Reasons for use or non-use of drugs poses another area of caution. The students themselves may not understand why they do or do not use drugs, but when asked these questions give the "socially expected" reply, or peer endorsed rationale.

In any self report inventory, there is always the inherent limitation of having to accept as truth, what the respondent says. As is usually the case, we have no way of verifying the truth or falsity of a subject's response, or of reliably inferring behavior from statements made. Finally, multiple statistical tests on large samples increase chances for Type 1 errors, although the results tend to be quite internally consistent.

Only with these limitations in mind is it appropriate to draw inferences from the data presented. Slightly more than 38% of the total sample could be labeled "drug users" as compared to approximately 63% who classify themselves as "non-users". For those users, the illegal drugs of marijuana and hashish topped the list, used minimally by 51% and 35% and regularly by 47% and 27% respectively. Among "users", the legal drugs, wine, beer and liquor, were all found to have a higher incidence and frequency of use than any of the nine illegal drugs. Cigarettes were the only "drug" in the legal category with a smaller incidence of use than one of the illegal drugs, i.e.,marijuana.

Typically, the men and women were found to have similar attitudes and behaviors regarding drug use, sale and legalization. But strong attitudinal differences were noted between users and non-users.

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Table 1.

Incidence of Drug Use by Year of Poll*

	Marijuana	Hashish	Speed	Downs	Mescaline	LSD	DMT	Cocaine	Heroin	Beer	Wine	Liquor	Cigarettes
1971-72	41%	30%	15%	--	11%	10%	5%	3%	1%	--	--	--	--
1972-73	47%	34%	15%	16%	12%	9%	4%	6%	2%	85%	90%	75%	60%
1973-74	52%	35%	16%	18%	10%	10%	5%	8%	2%	89%	92%	74%	57%

* Incidence = have ever used

-- = no data available

Table 2.

Incidence of Drug Use by Year of Poll and Sex*

	Marijuana	Hashish	Speed	Downs	Mescaline	LSD	DMT	Cocaine	Heroin	Beer	Wine	Liquor	Cigarettes
1971-72 (M)	44%	31%	17%	--	13%	15%	7%	4%	2%	--	--	--	--
(F)	37%	29%	14%	--	19%	7%	3%	3%	1%	--	--	--	--
1972-73 (M)	54%	40%	18%	18%	15%	13%	6%	7%	3%	91%	91%	81%	58%
(F)	38%	25%	12%	13%	8%	5%	3%	3%	1%	81%	88%	69%	62%
1973-74 (M)	55%	36%	13%	18%	10%	10%	5%	10%	2%	92%	91%	74%	57%
(F)	47%	33%	18%	18%	10%	9%	5%	5%	2%	86%	93%	74%	58%

*Incidence = have ever used

-- = no data available

Table 3.

Reasons for Non-Use of Drugs*

Item	Rank on 1971-72 Poll	Rank on 1972-73 Poll	Rank on 1973-74 Poll
Reports (or experiences) of harmful psychological effects	2	2	3
Reports (or experiences) of harmful physical effects	4	5	5
Observations of effects on others	3	3	2
Urging or potential disapproval from parents, friends, etc.	7	7	6
Illegality	5	4	4
Difficulty in obtaining the substance	8	8	7
No desire to experience its effects	1	1	1
Afraid of becoming addicted	6	6	8

*Ranks: 1=most frequent reason to 8 = least frequent reason

Table 4.

Reasons for Use of Drugs*

ITEM	Rank on 1971-72 poll	Rank on 1972-73 poll	Rank on 1973-74 poll
Explore inner self	6	7	8
For religious or mystical feeling	12	10	13
Relieve boredom	3	4	4
Feel less depressed or sad	8	10	9
Relieve general anxiety, tension, nervousness, and/or irritability	4	3	6
Shut things out of my mind	9.5	13	13
Prepare for stress	11	13	13
Experience things more vividly	2	5	6
Make a good mood last longer or make a fine feeling better	5	6	2
To be more friendly, enhance sociability and/or be more loving	7	2	3
To be like others I admire	13.5	13	11
Go along with what others are doing	9.5	8	6
Enjoy doing something illegal or "forbidden"	13.5	10	10
Get high, feel good	1	1	1

*Ranks: 1= most frequent reason to 14 = least frequent reason

Table 5.

Means and Standard Deviations for 15 Attitudinal Items

No.	Item	1971-72 Poll Mean*	1971-72 Poll S.D.	1972-73 Poll Mean	1972-73 Poll S.D.	1973-74 Poll Mean	1973-74 Poll S.D.
8	Marijuana should be legalized.	2.79**	1.28	2.44	1.31	2.51	1.29
9.	All drugs should be legalized.	4.56	.76	4.53	.79	4.48	.81
10.	If I were aware of someone USING MARIJUANA I would report them to the proper authorities.	4.29	.88	4.35	.83	4.30	.88
11.	If I were aware of someone USING OTHER DRUGS I would report them to the proper authorities.	4.00	1.04	4.01	1.03	3.91	.99
12.	If I were aware of someone SELLING MARIJUANA I would report them to the proper authorities.	3.73	1.26	3.71	1.30	3.69	1.24
13.	If I were aware of someone SELLING OTHER DRUGS I would report them to the proper authorities.	3.32	1.39	3.23	1.33	3.08	1.29
14.	I would NOT attend a drug education program on campus.	3.52**	1.31	3.30	1.17	3.28	1.07
15.	A drug counseling service should be provided for students.	1.63	.81	1.58	.81	1.63	.81
16.	The Student Government Association should fund a drug counseling center.	2.10	.96	2.24	1.04	2.16	.96
17.	I do NOT feel sorry for people on drugs.	3.31	1.20	3.37	1.21	3.21	1.16
18.	If the University has knowledge of a student USING MARIJUANA they should turn him over to the proper authorities.	3.84	1.10	3.92	1.11	3.91	1.08
19.	If the University has knowledge of a student USING OTHER DRUGS they should turn him over to the proper authorities.	3.42	1.21	3.38	1.25	3.31	1.20

Table 5. (Continued)

No.	Item	1971-72 Poll Mean	1971-72 Poll S.D.	1972-73 Poll Mean	1972-73 Poll S.D.	1973-74 Poll Mean	1973-74 Poll S.D.
20.	If the University has knowledge of a student SELLING MARIJUANA they should turn him over to the proper authorities.	3.16	1.36	3.20	1.38	3.29	1.33
21.	If the University has knowledge of a student SELLING OTHER DRUGS they should turn him over to the proper authorities.	2.64	1.30	2.52	1.34	2.57	1.29
22.	If I were using drugs and felt a need for counseling, I would go to the University Counseling Center.	2.23**	1.00	2.08	.97	2.19	.93

* 1= strongly agreee ; 5 = strongly disagree

** Difference between 1971-72 and other two years significant beyond the .05 level. There are no significant differences between 1972-73 and 1973-74.